

Chapter 10: Disaster Recovery Procedures

E. Special Media

Damage can be done if the incorrect salvage procedures are used. Various media require specialized treatment.

MICROFORMATS

Microfilm reels should be packed in clean, cold water. DO NOT FREEZE. A microfilm processor will have to wash and dry the rolls of film. Do not allow them to dry out. Leave them in their cartons. The cartons can be held together by rubber bands.

Microfiche can be air dried.

AUDIO-VISUAL MEDIA

Collodion plates and other images on glass should never be frozen. These items are quite water sensitive. The recovery rate is low for these items.

Daguerreotypes and other images on metal must be air dried immediately.

Framed items should be carefully removed from their frames in order to keep them from sticking to their *glazing materials*. If the *glazing material* has broken it can be held together with masking tape during the removal process.

Motion picture film Open the film canister and fill the canister with water. Pack in containers lined with garbage bags. A film processor should be hired to wash and dry the film.

Photographic prints on paper supports should not be frozen unless they will be dried by a professional conservator. If they must be frozen, they should be frozen quickly so the size of the ice crystal will be as small as possible. They should be salvaged within 48 hours. If they are not frozen, all photographs should be air dried image side up.

Slides should be removed from damaged mounts and air dried. Information that appears on the mount should be retained.

Sound and video recordings should be air dried. Tests involving freezing these media have been inconclusive. It is best to consult an audio-visual conservator. After about 48 hours the recordings begin to decompose. Discs should be kept vertically. They may be packed in dairy containers. The bottom should be padded with *ethafoam* and there should be *ethafoam* support every 25 records. Tapes should be stored vertically. Make sure that pressure on the sides is kept to a minimum.

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MAGNETIC MEDIA

Computer tapes and disks should have adequate backup copies stored in an off-site location. The literature on recovery of these items is contradictory. It is best to ask the manufacturer for the proper procedure. The more complex the technology the less likely complete recovery will be. Salvaged items may damage the equipment being used to read it. The best advice is to have adequate backup stored in an off-site location.

MISCELLANEOUS

Books with Coated Paper (shiny--commonly used in art books) **MUST** be frozen and freeze dried; **NOT AIR DRIED**. Freeze drying lessens the chances of pages being stuck together. If the book dries with the pages stuck together, there is no way to separate the pages.

Boxed items are quite fragile. They will require two people when they are moved. Do not open boxes on site, as the box may have kept the material dry, and you do not want to expose the materials to excessive humidity and mold spores.

Ephemera: Treat in the same manner as manuscripts.

Manuscripts (individual sheets) should be frozen and then freeze dried. If freeze drying is not available, wet manuscripts can be frozen in small batches. These small groupings can be air dried as time permits. When manuscripts are removed from the freezer, they must be allowed to thaw. Then the individual sheets must be separated. In Procedures for the Salvage of Water-Damaged Library Materials, Peter Waters explains a method of separating individual pages. This method requires a good deal of skill. A wet sheet of mylar is placed on top of the stack. As the piece of mylar is carefully pulled away, the surface tension of the water will remove several sheets of the wet paper. This smaller stack can be separated by placing another piece of mylar on the top and gently peeling back the page with the mylar. Repeat these actions as often as needed. **If this is done improperly severe damage can result.**

Maps with shellacked surfaces: When removing maps and other oversized materials it may be necessary to create a sling to support them during the move. Treat them in the same manner as individual sheets. They will have to be restored by a professional conservator. **DO NOT ATTEMPT ANY REPAIR WORK. DO NOT UNROLL, ETC.**

Mounted newspaper clippings: Remove from backing if possible. Treat in the same manner as manuscripts.